E13
RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLASSIFIED PTO3716

PAGE 01 STATE 236933 282040Z
ORIGIN ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	A-00
	CG-00	CIAE-00	CIP-00	CTME-00	INL-01	DODE-00	EUR-01
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	FCC-01	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-01	ADS-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-01
	OIC-02	OIG-04	PA-00	PM-00	SP-00	SS-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/027R		

236933
SOURCE: CLOUTCLS.004460
DRAFTED BY: ARA/PPCP:LSHAMILTON:LSH -- 12/28/98 647-4726
APPROVED BY: ARA/PPCP:M HAHN
PA: J RUBIN (SUBS)
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION:
DRL/BA-DMTITUS, H-MTREJO, NSC-FARMSTRONG
----------916314 282043Z /38
P R 282036Z DEC 98
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 236933 282040Z
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO
AMCONSUL TIJUANA
USCINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
CDR 193RD INFBDE (PAN) FT CLAYTON PN AFZU-PO
24TH WING HOWARD AFB PA
NAVSTA PANAMA CANAL RODMAN PN/PAO
USCINCTRANS INTEL CEN SCOTT AFB IL
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 15 JUL 2009 200503654

USCINCSO MACDILL AFB FL //POLAD

UNCLAS STATE 236933

ALL POSTS FOR PAO; ROME FOR VATICAN; USSOCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC
SUBJECT: ARA GUIDANCES, DECEMBER 22-23, 1998

---
1. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, DECEMBER 22, 1998:

STATEMENT BY JAMES P. RUBIN, SPOKESMAN

-- SATELLITE AGREEMENT WITH MEXICO SIGNED --
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 236933 282040Z

AMBASSADOR VONYA B. MCCANN, U.S. COORDINATOR, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION POLICY, YESTERDAY SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT A SATELLITE SERVICES PROTOCOL WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES. THIS PROTOCOL WILL EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSUMERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO USE THE LATEST SATELLITE TECHNOLOGIES FOR GLOBAL MOBILE SATELLITE SERVICES.

THE AGREEMENT IS ENTITLED "PROTOCOL CONCERNING THE TRANSMISSION AND RECEPTION OF SIGNALS FROM SATELLITES FOR THE PROVISION OF MOBILE-SATELLITE SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED FEEDER LINKS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES." THE PROTOCOL ESTABLISHES THE CONDITIONS AND TECHNICAL CRITERIA FOR THE USE OF SATELLITES LICENSED BY THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO FOR THE PURPOSE OF DELIVERING MOBILE SATELLITE SERVICES TO, FROM AND WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF BOTH COUNTRIES. IT WAS CONCLUDED PURSUANT TO THE APRIL 1996 "AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES CONCERNING THE TRANSMISSION AND RECEPTION OF SIGNALS FROM SATELLITES FOR THE PROVISION OF SATELLITE SERVICES TO USERS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES."

IN REACHING THIS IMPORTANT ARRANGEMENT, AMBASSADOR MCCANN STATED THAT "THIS PROTOCOL WILL EXPAND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR SATELLITE OPERATORS AND SATELLITE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. IT ALSO WILL PROMOTE COMPETITION IN BOTH MARKETS AND PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS FOR U.S. AND

MEXICAN CONSUMERS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH MORE INNOVATIVE

SERVICE OPTIONS. OPENING MARKETS IN THIS MANNER IS VERY BENEFICIAL FOR NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY EXPANDING TRADE, CREATING NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS." THE STATE DEPARTMENT WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE U.S. FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION ON THE NEGOTIATION OF THIS PROTOCOL, AND AMBASSADOR MCCANN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO FCC CHAIRMAN KENNARD FOR THESE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.

---

2. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, DECEMBER 23, 1998:

STATEMENT BY JAMES P. RUBIN, SPOKESMAN

-- CUBA: EXPULSIONS FROM CUBAN UN MISSION --

ON DECEMBER 23, 1998, THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK ADVISED THE CUBAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS THAT THREE OF ITS DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL MUST DEPART THE UNITED STATES FOR ACTIVITIES INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR STATUS AS MEMBERS OF A UN MISSION. IN ACCORD WITH NORMAL PRACTICE, WE ARE REQUIRING THESE OFFICIALS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS EXPEDITIOUSLY TO DEPART.

THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF EVIDENCE DEVELOPED DURING AN EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION BY THE FBI. THE FBI INVESTIGATION ALSO IMPLICATED TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN UN MISSION WHO HAVE ALREADY DEPARTED THE COUNTRY.

THE UNITED STATES TAKES ITS HOST COUNTRY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SERIOUSLY. WE CANNOT ACCEPT VIOLATIONS OF US LAWS AND ENDANGERMENT OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS. UNDER THE UN HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT THE U.S. HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTURE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES CONSTITUTING AN ABUSE OF THE PRIVILEGE OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

---

3. ARA PRESS GUIDANCE, DECEMBER 23, 1998:

CUBA: EXPULSIONS FROM CUBAN UN MISSION
VENEZUELA: VISIT WITH CHAVEZ

BRAZIL: APO MAIL DELIVERY

-- CUBA: EXPULSIONS FROM CUBAN UN MISSION --

Q: HAS THE USG INFORMED THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA THAT CERTAIN OF ITS DIPLOMATS ASSIGNED TO ITS UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN NEW YORK MUST LEAVE THE UNITED STATES?

A: THE CUBAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY HAS BEEN ADVISED THAT THREE OF ITS PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN CONDUCT OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THEIR OFFICIAL CAPACITIES AS MEMBERS OF THE MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND THAT THESE ACTIVITIES CONSTITUTE AN ABUSE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF RESIDENCE WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 13 (B) OF THE HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED NATIONS.

THE CUBAN UN MISSION HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO HAVE THE THREE PERSONS EXPEDITIOUSLY DEPART THE UNITED STATES.

Q: THIS SOUNDS LIKE STATE DEPARTMENT WAFFLING. IS THIS RELATED TO THE ESPIONAGE RING THAT THE FBI CRACKED IN MIAMI?

A. THE RECENT ARRESTS IN MIAMI OF TEN INDIVIDUALS ACCUSED OF OPERATING A LARGE ESPIONAGE RING WORKING FOR THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT DIRECTED AGAINST THE UNITED STATES SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. THE EXPULSIONS OF THE THREE CUBAN MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN UN MISSION IN NEW YORK ARE RELATED TO ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT THE FBI UNCOVERED DURING THIS INVESTIGATION.

Q. WHY DID THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TAKE THIS ACTION?

A. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTED FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION BY THE FBI AUTHORITIES WHICH REVEALED COMPELLING EVIDENCE REGARDING THE UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES OF THE THREE CUBAN PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THEIR UN MISSION.

Q. DOES THIS REFLECT A TOUGHENING OF U.S. POLICY ON CUBA?

A. THE ACTION WE HAVE TAKEN IS BASED ON THE FACTS, NOT ON OTHER POLITICAL OR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE A POLICY OF PRESSING THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE, REACHING OUT TO SUPPORT THE CUBAN PEOPLE, AND COOPERATING ON ISSUES SUCH AS MIGRATION AND, ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, COUNTER-NARCOTICS WHEN IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 236933 282040Z
Q. UNDER WHAT LEGAL AUTHORITY DID THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACT?

A. UNDER THE UN HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT, THE UNITED STATES HAS CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PRIVILEGE OF RESIDENCE OF UN MISSION MEMBERS. UNDER SECTION 15 OF THIS AGREEMENT, SUCH INDIVIDUALS ARE TREATED AS DIPLOMATS AND ACCORDED APPROPRIATE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES. HOWEVER, UNDER SECTION 13(B) OF THE SAME AGREEMENT THE UNITED STATES HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST THE DEPARTURE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES CONSTITUTING AN ABUSE OF PRIVILEGES OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Q. WHAT IS THE UN'S ROLE IN THIS?

A. WE HAVE BRIEFED APPROPRIATE UN AUTHORITIES.

THE UNITED STATES HAS USED INFREQUENTLY AND EXTREMELY JUDICIOUSLY ITS AUTHORITY UNDER THE HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT TO EXPEL INDIVIDUALS WHOSE ACTIONS ARE HARMFUL TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN ONLY AFTER AN EXHAUSTIVE INVESTIGATION BY THE FBI AND A PAINSTAKING REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT IT MET OUR LEGAL CRITERIA FOR REMOVAL OF THE THREE.

Q. WHERE ARE CUBAN DIPLOMATS LOCATED IN THE UNITED STATES?

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA MAINTAINS AN INTERESTS SECTION IN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 236933 282040Z
WASHINGTON AS PART OF THE SWISS EMBASSY.

COMPLETELY SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT OF THIS IS THE CUBAN PERMANENT MISSION ACCREDITED TO THE UNITED NATIONS WHICH IS LOCATED IN NEW YORK CITY.

Q: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION AFFECT THE OPERATIONS OF THE CUBAN INTERESTS SECTION IN WASHINGTON?

A: NO. AS I STATED, INDIVIDUALS ACCREDITED BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ARE CONSIDERED SEPARATE AND DISTINCT FROM EMBASSIES OR INTERESTS SECTIONS ACCREDITED TO THE UNITED STATES. THE CUBAN INTERESTS

SECTION OF THE SWISS EMBASSY IS UNAFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

WHILE THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA DO NOT MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, OUR RESPECTIVE INTERESTS SECTIONS IN HAVANA AND WASHINGTON ARE UNAFFECTED AND WILL CONTINUE TO CONDUCT BILATERAL BUSINESS AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST.

Q: HOW MANY CUBAN DIPLOMATS WERE REQUESTED TO LEAVE AND WHO ARE THEY?

A: THE CUBAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN ASKED TO WITHDRAW THREE INDIVIDUALS. AS PART OF NORMAL PRACTICE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT RELEASE THEIR NAMES OR OTHER DETAILS. THE INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF TIME TO DEPART THE UNITED STATES.

THE FBI INVESTIGATION ALSO IMPLICATED TWO OTHER CUBAN UN DIPLOMATS WHO HAD ALREADY DEPARTED THE UNITED STATES.

IF ASKED:

Q: HAS THE US TAKEN SUCH ACTION AGAINST CUBAN MEMBERS OF THEIR UN MISSION IN THE PAST?

A. IN 1995, THREE MEMBERS OF THE CUBAN MISSION WERE ORDERED TO LEAVE THE UNITED STATES FOR FIGHTING WITH PROTESTERS OUTSIDE OF THE CUBAN UN MISSION WHEN CUBA DECLINED TO WAIVE THEIR IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION.

IN 1992, ONE MEMBER OF THE CUBAN MISSION WAS EXPELLED FOR VARIOUS CLANDESTINE INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

IN 1989, ANOTHER CUBAN UN DIPLOMAT WAS EXPELLED FOR SIMILAR REASONS.

IN 1982 AND IN 1983, RESPECTIVELY, TWO CUBAN UN DIPLOMATS WERE EXPELLED IN EACH OF THESE YEARS FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CLANDESTINE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING.

-- VENEZUELA: VISIT WITH CHAVEZ --

CONTEXT: AN OP-ED IN THE MIAMI HERALD YESTERDAY TOOK UMBRAGE AT U.S. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO COZY UP TO VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT-ELECT AND FORMER COUP PLOTTER, HUGO CHAVEZ. CITING EVIDENCE OF THIS NEW POLICY SWING, HE STATES THAT AA/S PETER ROMERO WILL BE VISITING VENEZUELA NEXT WEEK TO MEET WITH CHAVEZ AND THAT THE GOV LEADER WILL BE COMING TO

WASHINGTON SOON, POSSIBLY MEETING WITH SECSTATE ALBRIGHT,
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 236933 282040Z
BEFORE HIS INAUGURATION IN FEBRUARY. WE CAN CONFIRM ROMERO'S TRIP, AND THAT CHAVEZ' VISA IS BEING PROCESSED, BUT LEAVE OUT ANY DETAILS ABOUT A YET-TO-BE- CONFIRMED WASHINGTON VISIT.

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY PETER ROMERO WILL BE MEETING WITH VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT-ELECT IN CARACAS NEXT WEEK? WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING?

A. YES, MR. ROMERO WILL TRAVEL TO THE VENEZUELAN CAPITAL NEXT WEEK AND IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT HUGO CHAVEZ. THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT IS TO DISCUSS THE FULL RANGE OF BILATERAL ISSUES, AND TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO MAINTAINING EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA.

Q. WHAT ABOUT MR. CHAVEZ' ROLE IN THE 1992 ATTEMPTED COUP? ARE YOU GLOSSING OVER YOUR PAST FEELINGS TOWARDS HIM?

A. MR. CHAVEZ WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT IN OPEN AND FAIR ELECTIONS. WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY HIS CONCILIATORY STATEMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS, AND WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND HIS ADMINISTRATION, AND TO CONTINUING THE TRADITIONALLY CLOSE AND STRONG TIES WE HAVE HAD WITH VENEZUELA.

Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ISSUES MR. ROMERO WILL RAISE OR ABOUT MR. CHAVEZ' TRAVEL PLANS TO WASHINGTON?

A. I WON'T GET INTO A DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC TOPICS OF CONVERSATION. THE FULL RANGE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL BE
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 236933 282040Z
ON THE TABLE. WE WILL CERTAINLY BE INTERESTED IN HEARING ABOUT MR. CHAVEZ' PLANS FOR GOVERNING HIS COUNTRY, AND I ASSUME MR. ROMERO WILL CONVEY OUR EXPECTATION THAT VENEZUELA'S CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS BE RESPECTED. I HAVE NO DETAILS ABOUT MR. CHAVEZ' FUTURE TRAVEL PLANS, BUT WE ARE EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFICIAL MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF MR. CHAVEZ' VISA REQUEST?

A. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT WE HAVE AUTHORIZED THE ISSUANCE OF A VISA FOR TRAVEL TO THE U.S.

-- BRAZIL: APO MAIL DELIVERY --

CONTEXT: MAIL TO EMBASSY AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN BRAZIL COMES IN TWO WAYS -- THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH, AND THROUGH THE MILITARY APO SYSTEM. THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH IS PROTECTED FROM SEARCH UNDER THE VIENNA CONVENTION, WHILE APO MAIL IS PROTECTED THROUGH A MILITARY AGREEMENT. WE CURRENTLY HAVE NO MILITARY AGREEMENT COVERING APO MAIL WITH BRAZIL, SO TECHNICALLY APO MAIL COULD BE SUBJECTED TO SEARCH AND DUTY. WE HAVE AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT THAT IT BE TREATED THE SAME AS POUCH MAIL, HOWEVER, A SYSTEM WHICH HAS BEEN RELATIVELY PROBLEM FREE. ON DECEMBER 7, HOWEVER, A SHIPMENT OF APO MAIL WAS SEARCHED DURING A CUSTOMS BLITZ, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL IMPORTS THROUGH THE AIRPORT OF RIO DE JANEIRO. THE OPERATION BY THE BRAZILIAN CUSTOMS POLICE, EVEN THAT WHICH INVOLVED THE SEARCH OF APO MAIL, WAS LEGAL, AND UNDERSTANDABLE, GIVEN

BRAZIL'S LEGITIMATE EFFORT TO ENHANCE REVENUE COLLECTION AS PART OF ITS ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM. THE SHIPMENT OF MAIL WAS DETAINED FOR TWO DAYS AND RELEASED. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS EXTREMELY EMBARRASSED OVER THE INCIDENT, AND HAS INTERVENED WITH BRAZILIAN CUSTOMS TO ENSURE IT DOES NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. SINCE THE INCIDENT, WE HAVE NOT HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE SENDING OR RECEIPT OF MAIL THROUGH THE APO SYSTEM.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY DETAILS ON A SHIPMENT OF MAIL CONTAINING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR EMBASSY CHILDREN THAT WAS LOST OR STOLEN?

A: NO EMBASSY FAMILIES HAVE REPORTED LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS FROM THE MAIL POUCH TO EMBASSY MANAGEMENT. THERE WAS AN INCIDENT EARLIER IN THE MONTH THAT COULD HAVE LED TO THESE KINDS OF RUMORS. ON DECEMBER 7 TWO EMBASSY VEHICLES WERE LEAVING THE AIRPORT IN RIO DE JANEIRO WITH 129 BAGS OF EMBASSY MAIL WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED THROUGH THE MILITARY APO SYSTEM. EMBASSY MAIL PERSONNEL CLEARED CUSTOMS AND WERE DEPARTING THE AIRPORT WHEN THEY WERE STOPPED AT A CUSTOMS POLICE ROADBLOCK, ESTABLISHED AS PART OF A SEARCH OPERATION TO STEM THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL IMPORTS. TWO EMBASSY VEHICLES AND 129 BAGS OF MAIL WERE IMPOUNDED FOR TWO DAYS AND THEN RELEASED. WHILE A SMALL NUMBER OF THE MAIL BAGS WERE OPENED FOR INSPECTION, WE HAVE HAD NO REPORTS OF LOST OR MISSING ITEMS. SINCE THAT INCIDENT WE HAVE HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH THE RECEIPT OF MAIL IN BRAZIL. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE BRAZILIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND DO NOT BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE ANY PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 13 STATE 236933 282040Z

4. INL PRESS GUIDANCE, DECEMBER 23, 1998:

COLOMBIA: HEROIN SEIZURE
MEXICO: ASSESSING JOINT ANTI-DRUG EFFORT

-- COLOMBIA: HEROIN SEIZURE --

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY DETAILS ON THE COLOMBIAN HEROIN BUST?

A: THE SEIZURE OF 66 POUNDS OF HEROIN FROM A SMALL PRIVATE AIRCRAFT ALONG THE CARIBBEAN COAST OF COLOMBIA IS THE LARGEST SUCH SEIZURE IN THE HISTORY OF COLOMBIA. THE AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN SEIZED AND THREE MEN WERE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SEIZURE. THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE HEROIN WAS LIKELY TO BE THE EAST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES. WE CONGRATULATE THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL POLICE ON THEIR EFFORTS.

THIS SEIZURE HIGHLIGHTS THE PROMINENCE OF COLOMBIAN-ORIGIN HEROIN IN THE U.S. MARKET. WE CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE AND THE REST OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT TO COMBAT THIS EMERGING THREAT.

-- MEXICO: ASSESSING JOINT ANTI-DRUG EFFORT --

Q: HAS OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM WITH MEXICO FAILED?

A: THE U.S./MEXICO ANTI-DRUG EFFORT HAS NOT FAILED. ON

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 14 STATE 236933 282040Z

THE CONTRARY, IT HAS BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL. WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE, IN PROGRAMS OR IN COMMUNICATION, THERE ARE BILATERAL MECHANISMS IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THEM.

AS THE RECENT MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT GROUP DEMONSTRATED, THE U.S. AND MEXICO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WELL ON A BROAD RANGE OF ANTI-DRUG PROGRAMS AND ISSUES.

REGARDING THE HELICOPTER SUPPORT PROGRAM, THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE (12/23) MISCHARACTERIZE THE EFFORT AS A FAILURE. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS IN THIS PROGRAM IN THE PAST TWO YEARS -- INCLUDING THE TEMPORARY GROUNDING OF THE FLEET DUE TO A SAFETY OF FLIGHT ISSUE AFFECTING ALL UH-1H HELICOPTERS WORLDWIDE -- WE ARE WORKING WITH MEXICO TO FIND SOLUTIONS.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THESE AIRCRAFT ARE TOOLS, NOT AN END IN THEMSELVES, AND THAT THEY REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE OVERALL BILATERAL ANTI-DRUG EFFORT. THE U.S. AND MEXICO ARE REVIEWING THAT EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE AIRCRAFT ARE USED IN THE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT THE MEXICAN NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG EFFORT AS WELL AS THE BINATIONAL STRATEGY.

THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE NOW DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS TO AID IN MORE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BILATERAL ANTI-DRUG STRATEGY.
SHERMAN

UNCLASSIFIED

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>